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Secretary of State Connie Lawson warns businesses to ignore deceptive letter

January 29, 2013

INDIANAPOLIS – Secretary of State Connie Lawson announced that some Indiana businesses have received a deceptive letter that may appear to come from the Business Services Division of her office. The letter should be ignored. It is an attempt to defraud Indiana business owners.

The letter solicits a \$125 annual fee and claims it will be used for record keeping and processing of a company's annual minutes. It gives the appearance of coming from a legitimate government agency and uses state law out of context. It also includes a "return by" date. The return address on some of the recent letters mailed to Indiana businesses goes to a box at a UPS Store in Speedway, Indiana.

"We take seriously our role to protect Hoosiers from scams of all nature," said Secretary of State Connie Lawson. "Any effort by swindlers to defraud Hoosier small businesses is deplorable."

"I would like to thank state Representative Bill Davis of Portland for bringing this to our attention."

Secretary Lawson is concerned businesses may be confused by the letter and may believe responding to it takes the place of business entity reporting that is legitimately required by state law. Businesses operating in Indiana can securely perform this reporting online through the Secretary of State's website, www.in.gov/sos/business. Businesses wishing to check the validity of any mailing from Indiana's Business Services Division or any division of the Office of the Indiana Secretary of State should contact the Business Services Division Help Line at 317-232-6576.

In 2008, a similar letter circulated and more than 100 businesses fell victim to the scam. The Attorney General's office successfully prosecuted the case in Marion County. The judge agreed the letters were misleading with intent to deceive. Secretary Lawson has turned the latest letters over to Attorney General Greg Zoeller.



Secretary of State Connie Lawson

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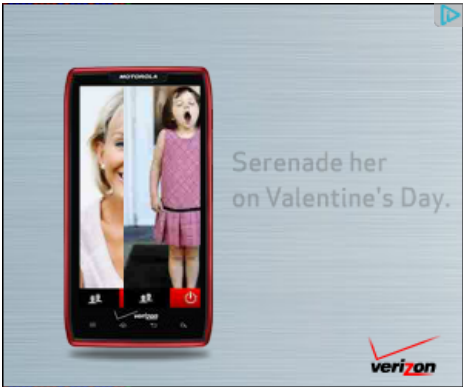
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